

Guidelines for Master's Examination for Professional Paper and Integrative Experience

These guidelines apply to students selecting either: **PH 596 Professional Paper or PH 595-597 Public Health Integrative Experience (IE)**.

The MPH oral examination fulfills the requirements of the University of New Mexico's "Master's Examination." It includes an oral presentation of the professional or IE paper followed by questions from the committee members and audience. The oral examination should be scheduled for a time when **all** major work and writing on the professional or IE paper are completed and the chair and committee members have reviewed the final draft of the manuscript.

Working with her/his committee, the student should arrange an appropriate time and place for the oral examination. **Two weeks prior to the oral examination, the student must provide each committee member with a clear, typed and electronic copy of the final draft of the professional or IE paper.** Preparation of the final typed copy of the professional or IE paper should be delayed until after the oral presentation since the committee members may, on the basis of the examination, require additional revisions. If the student does not submit the paper to the committee two weeks before the examination, then, it will be cancelled and rescheduled later in the semester or the following semester (see section on UNM Graduation Courtesy Policy). For the Master's Examination, the student should be prepared to answer questions from the committee and audience. These questions will be mainly related to the professional or IE paper contents, but the committee can also ask additional questions that are related to other MPH core or specific concentration competencies (See Appendix).

The student's Master's Examination Committee must be comprised of at least three (3) faculty, two (2) of whom must hold appointments as MPH primary faculty. Committee chairs must be primary faculty who hold appointments in the Public Health Program (consult the Public Health Program office). The student advisor may or may not serve as the chair or be part of the committee. Adjunct faculty, faculty from outside the Public Health Program, and emeritus faculty may serve on the committee at the discretion of the student and in consultation with her/his chair. All members of the committee must be approved for graduate instruction and service on examination committees by UNM Graduate Studies. For students completing the professional paper, the Master's Examination Committee is the same as the Professional Paper Committee.

Professional Paper: Students selecting the Professional Paper (PH 596) culminating experience should follow the "Professional Paper Requirement Guidelines" in selecting their committee and developing the paper.

Integrative Experience: Students selecting the IE culminating experience should complete the requirements for the final paper defined in the PH 595-597 course syllabi in consultation with the faculty member teaching the course. Students should identify a Master's Examination Committee Chair as soon as the paper topic is defined (not later than January 31st). The

Committee Chair will work with the student to ensure that the paper is consistent with the Guidelines for the IE Final Paper and for the Master's Examination.

Announcement of Master's Examination: When **all** major work and writing on the professional or IE paper manuscript are completed the oral examination should be scheduled. Working with her/his committee, the student should arrange an appropriate time and place for the presentation using the *Announcement of Examination* form. The form lists the Master's Examination committee members and the date of the examination. It must be signed by the Public Health Program Director and delivered to UNM Graduate Studies **two weeks** prior to the oral presentation. The MPH Graduate Adviser will assist with this process.

The Public Health Program will announce the time and place of the oral presentation so that interested faculty and students may attend. The University requires, at a minimum, the attendance of all committee members. If all of the Master's Examination Committee members cannot attend, then, the oral presentation must be rescheduled.

The Master's Examination: The examination is a formal oral presentation of the professional or IE paper, summarizing the public health problem addressed, the research or scholarly questions asked, the methods used, and the findings. Discussion of the findings and implications for the practice of public health is also a major part of the presentation. The student should prepare a 30 to 40 minute (maximum) presentation using PowerPoint slides and be prepared to answer questions from the committee and audience. These questions will be mostly related to the professional or IE paper contents, but the committee can also ask additional questions that are related to other MPH core or specific concentration competencies. (See the list of the core and concentration competencies on the attached appendix).

Grading: At the conclusion of the presentation, the committee will meet in private to discuss the student's presentation and written paper. The chair and all members of the Master's Examination Committee will sign the *Report of Examination* form which states whether the student "passed," "conditionally passed" or "failed."

Pass: If a student receives a "pass," she/he may still have minor revisions to complete based on questions and recommendations provided during the oral exam. The final typed copy with revisions must be submitted by the end of semester to the Chair of the Committee.

Pass with Distinction: The committee may also award a "passed with distinction" which is based upon the examination. To pass with distinction, the professional or the IE paper **and** the student's oral exam must demonstrate **exemplary**: 1) written and oral presentation skills, 2) coverage of the student's professional paper topic, 3) grasp of the larger public health context of the topic, and 4) knowledge of the MPH core courses and student's concentration competencies.

Conditionally Pass: If a student receives a "conditional pass," the committee chair notes the conditions that need to be met by the student on the examination form which is sent to Graduate Studies. These usually involve major revisions to the paper. There are two options for resolving

the conditional pass: 1) a student who plans to graduate in the same semester as the exam must resolve the conditional pass by the posted deadline for submission of examination results (Nov. 15, April 15, July 15th), or 2) a student who delays graduation to the following semester must be resolved the conditional pass by the examination deadlines for the following semester. In this second option, if a student completes the conditions noted by the committee and these are approved after the deadline for submission of examination results for the semester of the examination and before the last day of the semester, she/he will not need to pay for an additional credit to graduate in the following semester (see UNM Graduation Courtesy Policy below). If a student finishes the major revisions after the end date of the semester of the examination, they will need to pay an additional credit hour in the following semester. All conditional passes must be resolved by the examination deadlines for the semester following the semester of the examination. Once the conditions for the conditional pass are approved by the committee, the PHP office will submit a memo to Graduate Studies stating that the student has met the conditions and passed his/her exam.

Fail: If a student fails the examination, the PHP may recommend a second examination, which must be administered within one calendar year from the date of the first examination. The master's examination may be taken only twice. A second failure results in a student being terminated from the program.

Revisions: The Master's Examination Committee may require revisions to the professional or IE paper manuscript before granting final approval. The chair of the committee will work with the student to explain the required revisions and will sign off on the final version when those changes have been satisfactory addressed. The number of revisions likely to be required after the oral presentation will be reduced if the student has worked closely with all committee members throughout the research and writing process.

Deadlines for Report of Examination: Documentation of the completion of the Master's Examination (e.g., *Report of Examination* form) must be submitted to the UNM Office of Graduate Studies by the following dates to allow graduation:

- November 15th to allow graduation at the end of the Fall Semester.
- April 15th to allow graduation at the end of the Spring Semester.
- July 15th to allow graduation at the end of the Summer Semester.

This paperwork is completed and submitted by the chair of the student's Master's Examination Committee and the director of the Public Health Program. However, it is the student's responsibility to deliver the final revised professional or IE paper manuscript (including revisions) to the Master's Examination Committee chair by the deadline.

UNM Graduation Courtesy Policy: University regulations require that the student must be enrolled and complete a minimum of one hour of graduate credit in the term she/he completes degree requirements. Should the student miss the graduation deadline (July 15 for summer graduation, November 15 for fall graduation, April 15 for spring graduation), but completes all

degree requirements on or before the last day of that term, the student is not required to register for the next (graduation) term. The degree program must submit the student's name on the proposed graduation list for actual term of graduation.

Summary of Deadlines and Forms for Graduation

Students are responsible to understand and monitor UNM and Public Health Program requirements and due dates at all times while they are completing the requirements for the Master of Public Health degree. Deadlines are listed in the University Calendar. It is the student's responsibility, not the responsibility of the chair, members of the Master's Examination Committee, or the Public Health Program, to ensure that the general University requirements and due dates have been met for graduation. Students who plan to graduate should consult the webpage for UNM Graduate Studies to ensure requirements and deadlines are understood at: <http://grad.unm.edu/home/>

ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION (except for classes in which you are currently enrolled) MUST BE COMPLETED BY November 15th (Fall), April 15th (Spring), July 15th (Summer), or graduation will be delayed.

Incompletes: Must be removed and the grade recorded by the following dates or graduation will be delayed until satisfied:

- Fall Semester: November 15th
- Spring Semester: April 15th
- Summer Semester: July 15th

Program of Studies and Notification of Intent to Graduate (POS): *Due* to the MPH Program *an entire semester in advance of graduation* - by the following deadlines:

- Fall graduation: June 15th
- Spring graduation: September 15th
- Summer graduation: February 15th

The POS may be submitted any time after completion of 12 credit hours. POS must be approved before a student can take their master's exam.

Professional Paper Proposal: The professional paper proposal should be given to the Master's Examination Committee by:

- Fall Semester: one month **before the end** of the Summer Semester.
- Spring Semester: one month **before the end** of the Fall Semester.
- Summer Semester: one month **after the beginning** of the Spring Semester.

Announcement of Master's Examination: Once the final draft of the professional or IE paper has been submitted to the Committee members, the student should schedule the oral presentation using the *Announcement of Examination* form. The form lists the committee members and must be signed by the Public Health Program Director and delivered to UNM Graduate Studies **two weeks** prior to the oral presentation.

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- July 15th to allow graduation at the end of the Summer Semester.

APPENDIX
MPH Competencies

After completion of the degree, the graduate should be able to:

1. Apply ethical principles to professional practice when acting in any capacity as a public health professional.
2. Identify the importance of working collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies, health care service providers and community organizations).
3. Apply the socioecological framework to identify health problem at the population level and develop interventions.
4. Apply critical thinking to analyze and develop interventions based on public health sciences, including behavioral, environmental, and social sciences, biostatistics, and epidemiology.
5. Access, evaluate and communicate accurate demographic, statistical, programmatic, policy, and other scientific information in relevant modalities with professionals, community members, and policy makers.
6. Interact sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse demographic, cultural, socioeconomic, educational, and professional backgrounds and lifestyles preferences.
7. Demonstrate leadership skills to promote public health initiatives for improving the health status of populations when acting at the local, state, national and international levels.
8. Describe the basic principles of participatory approaches to public health research and practice.

Community Health Concentration Competencies

After completion of this concentration, the graduate should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate practice-based approaches, theory and planning models and sound research methods for developing, implementing, managing, evaluating, and disseminating community health Interventions.
2. Assess community and population needs and assets, and readiness for change at the individual, interpersonal, community, institutional and policy levels in order to develop relevant public health interventions.
3. Integrate participatory approaches into research and practice to facilitate community engagement and self-determination.
4. Identify and embrace community resources and strengths and act with cultural respect and humility.

Epidemiology Concentration Competencies

After completion of this concentration, the graduate should be able to:

1. Describe the strengths, limitations, and issues such as bias, confounding, and effect modification pertinent to the proper application and execution of various epidemiologic study designs.
2. Identify and be able to access sources of public health data, such as vital statistics records, disease registries, other surveillance databases, census data, national surveys, and medical records.
3. Analyze and interpret epidemiologic measures of occurrence and association using basic statistical tests and models and summarize and present the findings.
4. Integrate epidemiologic and biostatistical knowledge in the critical evaluation of public health literature, including the use of theories of causation and criteria for causal inference, and identification of demographic, behavioral, social and environmental factors influencing population health.

Health Systems, Services and Policy Concentration Competencies

After completion of this concentration, the graduate should be able to:

1. Describe and apply appropriate theory and research approaches and methods to the analysis of health systems, public health and health care services and programs, and governmental and non-governmental policies.
2. Identify key social actors/stakeholders and the roles they play in national and international health systems, and public health and health care services and programs and in developing national governmental and non-governmental policies.
3. Identify the most important problems affecting international and national health systems, and public health and health care services and programs, and policies.
4. Use public health data including as vital statistics, hospital discharge data, health care quality and expenditure data, disease registries, census data, national surveys, and other surveillance data.
5. Integrate qualitative and quantitative methods, and policy analyses in the critical evaluation of public health literature related to public health systems, services and policies.